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sions recorded by Child, but not *saucy*. Neither is it in his glossary; nor, in any sense that will fit here, in the *Century Dictionary*. The *English Dialect Dictionary* records a Yorkshire meaning, "slippery . . ., said of the streets when covered with ice, but not when slippery with dirt." There is nothing in the ballad to suggest icy weather. A friend considers it a corruption of *salt sea*; but this, leaving aside the redundancy (which is, of course, no great objection in ballads), is inconsistent with the rhythm of the line. Remembering the derivation of *sauce* one is tempted to fancy in this ballad word an ancient meaning retained—a temptation, however, which the philologic conscience must resist.

Two versions of *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*,² one from Miller County and one from Gentry County, have as their opening lines respectively

"Come mother, come mother, come riddle your *sword*,"

and

"Come mother, come mother, come riddle your *sport*."

The manifold perversions of the old formula for asking advice in the versions of this ballad printed by Child, some of them amusing, but none of them quite inexplicable, afford no suggestion for the interpretation of the Missouri form, and I had accepted it as altogether meaningless until a passage in Professor Gummere's *The Popular Ballad*³ suggested that it might be a relic of ancient popular belief in the soothsaying power of weapons. *Sport* in the second version would then be a mis-hearing of *sword*. But how should such an archaic variant escape the net of Professor Child and his collaborators, to reappear in Missouri in the twentieth century?

The fifth stanza of *A Woman and the Devil*⁴ (which is a version of *The Farmer's Curst Wife* known in Bollinger County), has this:

"Ten little devils come *all on a wire*,
She up with her foot and kicked nine in the fire."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 249.

³ P. 304, where Gummere quotes from *Gil Brenton*:

"And speak up, my bonnie brown sword, that winna lie."

⁴ *Jour. of Amer. Folk-Lore*, xix, 299.

This corresponds to the 8th stanza of Child's version A,

"She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains,
She up with her pattens and beat out their brains."

There is nothing corresponding to it in the other version given by Child. (The broadside of *The Devil and the Scold* in the *Roxburghe Ballads* I have not seen.) The little devils coming "all on a wire" look like a reminiscence of the miracle plays or of popular stage-craft derived therefrom. According to Chambers's *Mediaeval Stage*, II, 142, the stage directions of the Cornish *Creation of the World*, a partial cycle written by William Jordan in 1611, show that "Lucifer goes down to hell 'apareled fowle wth fyre about hem' and the plain [in which the play is acted] is filled with 'every degre of devylls of lether and *spirytis on cordis*.'" This seems to present precisely the visual image of the Bollinger County version. Chambers adds that performances of a similar character were known in Shropshire and Wales down to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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BRIEF MENTION.

Etude philologique sur le Nord de la France (Pas-de-Calais, Nord, Somme). Par L. BRÉBION. Paris and London, 1907. xxv + 255 pp., 8°.

Mr. Brébion gives under this title a study of the patois of a group of villages in Artois (Créquy, Fressin, Planques, Sains and Torcy), embracing a comparison with the French of the phonology, morphology, and word-formation. The author seems acquainted with the leading French studies in dialectology, but there are indications that he has not sufficiently assimilated the methods employed in them, nor does he give any clue to how he collected and controlled his material. His transcription of the sounds is a poor compromise between a phonetic system and French official orthography.